



Connecting You with Extraordinary Hunting & Fishing Adventures Worldwide!
Calculating the cost of hunting in South Africa

Getting there

No way around this one, it isn't cheap. At least the best hunting is during their slow season, winter, from about March through September, give or take a month or two. Figure \$2000 per person.

Published cost of the hunt

Typically, hunts in Africa consist of two components: daily rate and trophy fee per animal. Daily rates vary from outfitter to outfitter, and from quarry to quarry. As you might imagine, the plainsgame daily rate is considerably less than that for more dangerous game and the big five. Trophy fees also vary from outfitter to outfitter, as the rates are established in conjunction with the landowners on which the hunts take place. Typically the landowner gets about 75% of the trophy fee, and the outfitter 25%. Trophy fees also vary by animal. Not unexpectedly, trophy fees for animals which are plentiful and fairly easy to hunt are lower than those which are less common and/or are more difficult to hunt.

Determine the number of hunting days and multiply by the daily rate to come up with the basic hunt price, followed by a discussion as to the animals to be hunted and their trophy fees, to come up with a plan for the hunt and the total hunt price. At least the daily rate and perhaps the agreed upon trophy fees are to be paid in advance.

Package Hunts

Most outfitters offer package hunts, where the daily rate is combined with a specific list of animals to be hunted over a specified number of days. You have to be careful with packages, so as to understand exactly what you are buying. Some outfitters use their packages as "management hunts", in other words, they don't specifically search out trophies. Rather it is an opportunity for a good hunt, but not necessarily for a shot at a trophy caliber animal. Other outfitters offer package hunts to make it easier for them to plan the hunts for you, their client. It allows them time to work with the landowners before you arrive, to search out the best quality animals and best opportunity for a trophy available. These outfitters often also offer various management packages. True trophy hunts are another option. If the true intent of the package hunt isn't obvious in an outfitter's literature, we'll ask them. Package costs typically have to be paid in advance.

Tax

Don't forget tax. The VAT (Value Added Tax) is about 14% and is applicable only on the daily rate.

Tipping

Each of our outfitters stress that tips, whether to tip or not and how much, are at your discretion. Period. After a bit of begging I got the following reluctant information out of one of them:

PH: in the neighborhood of about 5-10% of the daily rate, about between \$300-400 for 7-10 day hunts

Tracker: about \$80-100 for the entire stay

Cook: about \$50/week

Laundry: figure \$2-3/day

Housekeeper: figure \$2-3/day

Skinners: about \$2-3/animal

Some of these tips may be figured into your hunt cost, like for the skinners and extra trackers you might use - just ask the outfitter. PH tips may be in US currency or South African Rand. You might consider exchanging USD for Rand at the international airport before leaving the US or at the airport in Johannesburg, to tip the rest of the staff.

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Trophy Handling Costs - Taxidermy done in US (2007)

Dip and pack by local African taxidermist: about \$75/animal

Crating and preparation of export documents by local African taxidermist \$295/8 animals for us in 2007

Forwarder fee: \$600, which includes their fees and the actual shipping costs. The forwarder keeps watch over your trophies once they leave the local taxidermist until they are on the ship bound for the US.

Broker fee: \$300, which includes their fees, customs and dock fees. The broker watches over your trophies from their arrival at US port-of-entry, through inspection, until they are on truck bound for your designated taxidermist.

Shipping fee: about \$400-800 (if don't use a freight forwarder)

Dock fee at port-of-entry (daily rate, as crate sits waiting to clear customs, USF&W, USDA): about \$200-300 (if don't use broker)

Trucking fee from port of entry to your taxidermist (if don't use broker)

Taxidermist fee to disinfect trophies/crate, to destroy crate (has to be done by a Restricted License taxidermist)

Taxidermist fees for mounts

Forwarder/broker services are optional, but highly recommended. Figure 18 months until the mounts are hanging.

Trophy Handling Costs - Taxidermy done in Africa

From talking to hunters and outfitters, taxidermy costs are considerably less expensive in Africa (less than half US costs). Plus, there are no dip-n-pack, forwarder, broker fees. The taxidermy is done and the mount is shipped to you. Possibly it is quicker as well, some estimates suggest about 6 months. Even so, many hunters still choose to ship their trophies home to have the taxidermy done by a US taxidermist. However, it should definitely be a consideration for European mounts, and if only the hides are being tanned.

Bonus Animals and Trophy Fees

The nice thing about hunting in South Africa is the abundance of a variety of game that may present itself unexpectedly. Often times, it will be a viable quarry (i.e., okay to shoot). The question is, should you? If you shoot, you will be required to pay the published or agreed upon trophy fee. In cash. Before you can leave the lodge. In extreme cases, the outfitter has the right to confiscate your passport and tickets, until the fee is paid. Most do not accept credit cards. US currency is accepted. Most accept standard Traveler's Checks. There are also ATM machines in most towns and cities, to withdraw cash from - as long as you have set something up with your bank/debit card or credit card company ahead of time.

If it is important to you to stay in budget, consider also that dip-n-pack, forwarding, shipping, brokering, inspecting, trucking to your taxidermist and taxidermy fees will also apply to each additional animal taken. If bringing a trophy to mount home isn't important, if the hunt is all you want, then of course those additional fees will not be an issue.

Now, that being said, it is quite exciting to be able to say YES to such unexpected opportunities. In fact, it is actually one of the most unique aspects of going to South Africa to hunt. Our advice? When planning your hunt, work with the outfitter to plan for the animals you really want. Then look over the trophy fees to gauge what other animals cost. Decide how much extra money to bring along, and then bring along a bit more. Talk to your bank and credit card company ahead of time, about making \$X available should you decide you need it. No one is going to make you spend that extra money. And if you think about it in advance, in the event you are faced with that once in a lifetime opportunity, you will have no regrets about your decision whether to shoot or not.

During our trip to South Africa in 2007, Brian took a very nice and respectable 49.5" Eastern Cape kudu the first day. On the morning of the last day of a very successful week of hunting, Brian found himself face to face at 35 yards with a huge, worthy-of-the-record-books 54" kudu. Since he already had his Cape kudu, he passed on the shot, instead reveling in the experience of being so close to such a magnificent animal. Does he regret it? Not at all. He is perfectly happy with his gorgeous 49.5" Cape kudu trophy. Besides, the living room isn't big enough for 2.

Concluding Thoughts

So, is it more expensive than hunting in Canada or Alaska? Maybe yes, but likely not once you compare apples to apples. Besides, are there kudu and gemsbok in Canada?

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